

Appl. No. 09/988,821

Amendment & Response to Office Action dated February 16, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A method of facilitating provision of a point-to-point cable connection between first and second points separated by an extended span of water including a first region of shallow water and a second region of relatively deep water, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to an offshore termination point between the first and second points, wherein the plurality of ducts are combined to form a multiple duct conduit;

placing a first communication cable in one of said plurality of ducts to provide a connection between the first point and said offshore termination point;

receiving at said offshore termination point, a second communication cable from the second point; and

connecting said first communication cable to said second communication cable at said offshore termination point to create the point-to-point cable connection.

2. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said first point is onshore and said providing step comprises:

providing said plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to said offshore termination point between the first and second points, wherein said offshore termination point is at a distance of at least 2 kilometers from the first point.

3. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said first point is onshore and wherein said providing step comprises:

providing said plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to said offshore termination point between the first and second points, wherein said offshore termination point is at a distance of about 10 to 20 kilometers from the first point.

4. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein said first point is onshore and wherein said providing step comprises:

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providing said plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to said offshore termination point between the first and second points, wherein said offshore termination point is adjacent to a transition between the first and second regions.

5. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 4, wherein said first region is a Continental Shelf.

6. (Original): The method of claim 5, wherein said offshore termination point is positioned in water having a depth of less than about 200m.

7. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said placing step comprises placing the first communication cable in one of said plurality of ducts to provide a connection between the first point and said offshore termination point, wherein said cable is a relatively thin, lightweight cable; and

said receiving step comprises receiving at said offshore termination point, a second cable from the second point, wherein said second cable is an armored cable.

8. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of:
burying said plurality of ducts in the seabed.

9. (Original): The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of:
burying said plurality of ducts in the seabed at a burial depth that decreases as a function of distance from said first point such that said plurality of ducts are buried deeper near said first point.

10. (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein said first point is onshore, adjacent a shoreline.

11. (Original): the method of claim 1, wherein said providing step comprises:
providing said plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to said offshore termination point between the first and second points, wherein said offshore termination point is an offshore platform.

12. (Original): The method of claim 11, wherein said providing step further comprises:

providing communication equipment on said offshore platform to receive and transmit signals via said first and second cables.

13. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

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providing a plurality of spaced apart cable exits in the region of the offshore termination point.

14. (Original): The method of claim 13, wherein said step of providing a plurality of spaced apart cable exits comprises:

providing said plurality of spaced apart cable exits in the region of the offshore termination point, wherein said spaced apart cable exits are preferably spaced apart by at least 50m.

15. (Original): The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:
branching each of said plurality of ducts so that each duct leads to a corresponding cable exit.

16. (Currently Amended): A system for facilitating provision of a point-to-point cable connection between first and second points separated by an extended span of water including a first region of shallow water and a second region of relatively deep water, comprising:

an offshore termination point located between the first and second points, for receiving at least one first communication cable from the first point and at least one second communication cable from the second; and

a plurality of ducts extending from the first point through the first region of the extended span to said offshore termination point, each of said ducts being configured to receive at least one first communication cable; wherein the plurality of ducts includes at least two ~~non-integral~~ conduits formed as a multiple duct conduit.

17. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 16, wherein said offshore termination point is at a distance of at least 2 kilometers from the first point.

18. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 16, wherein said offshore termination point is at a distance of about 10 to 20 kilometers from the first point.

19. (Original): The system of claim 16, wherein said offshore termination point is adjacent a transition between the first and second regions.

20. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 19, wherein said first region is a Continental Shelf.

21. (Original): the system of claim 16, further comprising:

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a first cable extending through one of said plurality of ducts to provide a connection between the first point and said offshore termination point; and

a second cable extending from the second point to said offshore termination point.

22. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

placing a third cable in one of the said plurality of ducts to provide another connection between the first point and said offshore termination point;

receiving at said termination point, a fourth cable extending from a third point; and connecting said third cable and said fourth cable at said offshore termination point, wherein a point-to-point cable connection is made from the first point to the third point.

23. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the second communication cable is received at the offshore termination point as a single point-to-point cable unassociated with a plurality of ducts.

24. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of ducts includes an outer duct having a plurality of sub-ducts defined therein.

25. (Previously Presented): A multi-point cable connection system, the system comprising:

a termination point located at a first location, wherein the termination point includes a first cable end associated with a first communication cable that extends from the termination point to a second location, and a second cable end associated with a second cable that extends from the termination point to a third location;

a plurality of ducts extending from a fourth location to the termination point, wherein a third cable end associated with a third communication cable emerges from one of the plurality of cable ducts, and wherein a fourth cable end emerges from another of the plurality of cable ducts; and

wherein the third cable end is connected to the first cable end at the termination point, and wherein the fourth cable end is connected to the second cable end at the termination point.

26. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 25, wherein the first cable end and the second cable end are associated with single point-to-point cables each unassociated with a plurality of ducts.

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27. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 24, wherein the plurality of ducts comprises at least two separate and distinct conduits.

28. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 27, wherein the two separate and distinct conduits are housed by a multi-bore connection plate located at an end of a length of the outer duct.

29. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 24, wherein the outer duct is fabricated onshore.

30. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the termination point is installed at a first depth underwater, wherein the termination point is recoverable to a second depth, and wherein the second depth is a serviceable depth.

31. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 16, wherein the termination point includes multiple cable exits over an extended region, whereby cables can exit ones of the plurality of ducts at spaced apart locations.

32. (Previously Presented): The system of claim 16, wherein the outer duct is not integrally attached to the plurality of ducts.

33. (Previously Presented): A method of providing communication between first and second points separated by an extended span of water including a first region of shallow water and a second region of relatively deep water, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of ducts from the first point through the first region of the extended span to an offshore termination point between the first and second point, wherein the offshore termination point is an offshore platform;

placing a first cable in one of said plurality of ducts to provide a connection between the first point and said offshore termination point;

receiving at said offshore termination point, a second cable from the second point; and

providing communication equipment on said offshore platform to receive and transmit signals via the first and second cables.

34. (Added): The method of claim 1, wherein one of the plurality of ducts is an outer duct that encompasses at least two others of the plurality of ducts, wherein the outer duct includes a water tight seal, wherein a region of trapped air is disposed between the outer duct and the at least two others of the plurality of ducts, and wherein the method further comprises:

installing the plurality of ducts, wherein installing the plurality of ducts includes eliminating the trapped air such that the plurality of ducts sinks in water.